

Menaka Thakkar Dance Company

*in co-operation with Nrityakala
Presents*

an exciting new choreographic work based upon a poem of
India's Nobel Prize Winner, Rabindranath Tagore

Farewell to Heaven

Fusing Indian and Western systems of classical dance and music

Choreography: Menaka Thakkar Musical Score: Alex Pauk

Orchestra: Members of Esprit Orchestra (live on stage)

and

Interior Landscape

an innovative choreographic work in traditional Indian dance,
BHARATANATYAM,
based upon 2,000 year old "Sangam" poetry of South India

Choreography: Menaka Thakkar with live Indian Music Orchestra

Place:

du Maurier Theatre Centre, Harbourfront Centre
231 Queens Quay West

March 8, 9, 1996 8:00 p.m. March 10, 1996 2:00 p.m.

Tickets: \$20, \$25 (15% discount - seniors & students)

Ticket Information: (416) 973-4000

Menaka Thakkar Dance Company

Menaka Thakkar is an internationally renowned performer, choreographer and teacher working in three classical dance styles of India: Bharatanatyam, Odissi and Kuchipudi. An adjunct professor of dance at York University, Menaka is also the artistic director of her own dance school, Nrityakala, and the principal choreographer and music director of 'Menaka Thakkar Dance Company of Canada'. She has performed extensively around the world and received numerous performance and choreography awards in India and Canada. Her recent honours include an Honorary Doctor of Letters (D. Litt.) degree from York University; a documentary film on her by the CBC television network; the nomination of her fusion choreography for The Dora Mavor Moore Award; and finally a Trinational Creative Artists Award by The National Endowment for the Arts under the United States/Canada/Mexico Creative Arts Residency Programme.

Menaka Thakkar Dance Company of Canada was founded by Menaka Thakkar; she remains its artistic director, principal choreographer and performer, with a core company of 8 dancers. All members of the company have trained with Menaka Thakkar in her dance institute Nrityakala. In fact the performance activity which is now carried on through the company was, in the early years, an integral part of the school. The Company's repertoire includes traditional and new choreographic works in classical Bharatanatyam and Odissi dance, as well as the new choreographic works of Menaka Thakkar. The Company has toured across Canada, performing to critical and popular acclaim in Montreal, Ottawa, Vancouver, St. John's, Winnipeg and Toronto, as well as France, Germany, England, Sweden, and India and was the first Indian dance company based outside India to tour Japan and Singapore. The present production features Menaka as the principal dancer.

Alex Pauk's music, specially commissioned for this dance production, puts traditional Indian musical elements in a new light by extending their character and use in combination with Western new music techniques and traces of a "world music" approach to composition. The moods and structures within the piece are highly influenced by the choreographic designs of Menaka Thakkar as well as the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore, whose 'Farewell to Heaven' provided the inspiration for this collaboration.

The present performance features Alex Pauk conducting members of Esprit Orchestra.

Esprit Orchestra

Music Director and Conductor - Alex Pauk

Esprit is Canada's only orchestra uniquely committed to commissioning and performing contemporary orchestral music by Canadian composers. It has a core of 45 musicians, each with the special skills needed to perform new music.

Since it was founded by Alex Pauk in 1983, Esprit Orchestra has commissioned 44 new works by 38 Canadian composers. Committed also to setting Canadian music within an international framework, Esprit has performed over 65 new works by leading composers from around the world, giving most of these new works their Canadian premiere. Esprit has released three compact discs, available on CBC Records' SM5000 label.



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